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23 January 1974 OSR No. 121

Mr. R. W. Komer
The Rand Corporation
2100 M Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20037

Dear Bob:

As promised in Bill Colby's letter to you, we have reviewed the NATO force restructuring study and view it as an important document. It brings into focus many of the issues involved in any proposed restructuring of NATO in the context of MBFR. Equally relevant, the study presents ways for NATO to achieve a credible conventional defense in Western Europe. This seems appropriate in view of the continued emphasis by the Secretary of Defense on the importance of conventional forces in Europe.

As frequently happens, some of the study's secondary assumptions have been overtaken by events or further analysis. For example, the premise of virtually unlimited US flexibility in withdrawing troops under an MBFR agreement no longer seems possible. The Soviets have made clear at Vienna that the US will not be permitted to withdraw support troops and individuals while forcing the USSR to withdraw combat troops and units.

The conclusions and recommendations of the study, nevertheless, make a significant contribution to the growing body of analysis on the complex subject of a credible conventional defense for NATO after MBFR.

Best regards.

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Faithfully yours,

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E. H. Knoche Director Strategic Research